

CLAYTON FRITCHIEY

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Nixon's Vision of the White House

Washington—There is nothing synthetic about Richard Nixon's confidence. He is already dreaming the impossible dreams of a man who has already been elected. Usually these fantasies do not seize a candidate until he has won, but they are unmistakable.

Nearly all new Presidents make the same resolutions: (1) They are going to delegate authority and not be swamped by detail, (2) they are going to have a super cabinet, (3) yes-men will be abolished, (4) all major parties and factions will be represented in the government, (5) the boss will listen and let his advisers do the talking.

Our President, Nixon says, "should not delude himself into thinking that he can do everything himself." His time should not be "drained away in trivia." Easier said than done. Lyndon Johnson said the same thing, but he found he could not depend on others to turn out all the White House lights, and Franklin Roosevelt found he had to make the martinis himself if he wanted them just right.

Presidents vow they will not waste time on glad-handing but there's a price for it. FDR was the first President who had nerve enough to skip the DAR Convention; but the ladies are still voting against him because of it. Presidents swear they are going to swear off the gridiron and White House correspondents dinners, but they seldom do.

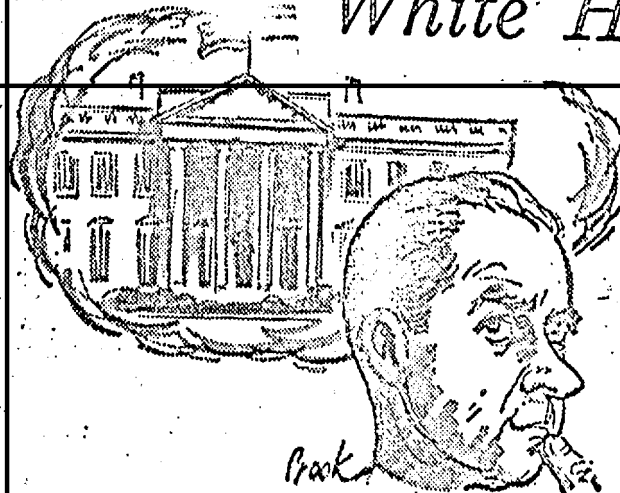
"I want," says Nixon, "a government drawn from the broadest possible base—an administration made up of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents." Only Democratic Presidents have ever gone in for this kind of bipartisanship, and the results have not been sensational.

After President Kennedy completed his cabinet some wondered which party had won the election. He appointed Republican Robert McNamara head of Defense, and Republican Douglas Dillon head of Treasury. He retained Republican Allen Dulles as director of CIA until he was replaced by Republican John McCone. He named Republican William Foster to head the disarmament agency and Republican McGeorge Bundy to be his chief White House foreign affairs adviser.

The fact that most of these top appointees enthusiastically urged both Kennedy and Johnson to plunge ever deeper into Vietnam has prompted some critics to think that Kennedy and Johnson might have done just as well with a Democratic cabinet, and hang bipartisanship.

Nixon says he is going to surround himself with "a cabinet made up of the ablest men in America." Warren Harding, who also felt a little inadequate, made the same promise, and when he came to he found himself in the midst of the Tea Pot Dome debacle. A super cabinet also was going to make up for Gen. Eisenhower's lack of political experience. But John Foster Dulles "unleashed" Chiang Kai-shek, Treasury Secretary Humphrey ran up a record deficit, and Charley Wilson at Defense thought what was good for General Motors was best for the nation.

"A President," declares Nixon, "must listen." Rubbish. What's the use of struggling all your life to become President if you still have to spend all your time listening? Listening is for the hired hands.



"I don't want a government of yes-men," says the GOP nominee. Of course not. No President does. There was the time, for instance, when LBJ called his advisers together and is supposed to have said, "I don't want any yes-men around here. Whenever you disagree with me, I hope you'll feel free to speak up. After all, you can always get another job." It's a story that could just as well be told about almost any President.

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